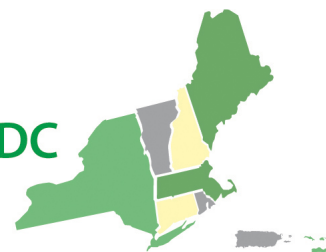




Regional Educational Laboratory at EDC

Northeast College and Career Readiness
Research Alliance



Bridge Event AGENDA

Research Symposium: Perspectives on the Current Landscape of
Competency-Based Learning Research

Thursday, October 6, 2016
9:30–3:00 p.m. ET

Education Development Center, Inc.
43 Foundry Avenue
Waltham, Mass.

9:00–9:30 a.m.	Registration
9:30–9:35 a.m.	Welcome and Introduction Jill Weber, Director, REL Northeast & Islands
9:35–9:40 a.m.	Opening Remarks David Offensend, President and CEO, Education Development Center, Inc.
9:40–10:00 a.m.	Keynote Presentation Paul Leather, Deputy Commissioner of Education, New Hampshire Department of Education
10:00–10:10 a.m.	Q&A Moderated by Jessica Brett, Facilitator, Northeast College and Career Readiness Research Alliance (NCCRA), REL Northeast & Islands
10:10–10:50 a.m.	Research, Policy, and Practice Panel Discussion Moderated by Dr. Scheopner Torres, Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Saint Anselm College; Research Consultant, REL Northeast & Islands <i>Panelists:</i> Paul Leather Dr. Erika Stump, Research Associate II, Center for Education Policy, Applied Research, and Evaluation (CEPARE), University of Southern Maine Dr. R. Marc Brodersen, Senior Researcher, REL Central at Marzano Research Dr. Salvatore Menzo, Superintendent of Schools, Wallingford Public Schools, Conn.

10:50–11:10 a.m.	Table Talk Discussions Participants will be invited to reflect on the panel.
11:10–11:30 a.m.	Facilitated Q&A Dr. Scheopner Torres will ask panelists to reflect on the responses from the audience and initiate a Q&A on the panel discussion.
11:30–11:40 a.m.	Break
11:40 a.m – 12:40 p.m.	Concurrent Sessions—Morning <i>Local Implementation of State-Mandated Proficiency-Based Diploma Policy in Maine</i> Dr. Kathryn Hawes, Superintendent of Schools, Regional School Unit 21, Maine Dr. Erika Stump <i>The Importance of Assessment in Competency-Based Systems: Two Districts’ Experiences</i> Dr. R. Marc Brodersen Kenneth Daly, Assistant Principal, Lyman Hall High School, Wallingford, Conn. <i>What Does Competency-Based Learning Look Like in the Classroom? Exploring (and Measuring!) Student Experiences</i> Wendy Surr, Senior Researcher, American Institutes for Research (AIR) Lauren Clymer, Research Associate, AIR Dr. Sarah Ryan, Research Associate, REL Northeast & Islands Josh Cox, Research Associate, REL Northeast & Islands Derek Hamilton, Dean of Operations, Pittsfield School District, N.H.
12:40–1:15 p.m.	Lunch
1:15–2:00 p.m.	<i>“The Student Voice”</i> Moderated by Dr. Sarah Ryan, Research Associate, REL Northeast & Islands Student representatives from Nashua, Pittsfield, and Souhegan High Schools in New Hampshire will serve on a panel to answer questions about their experiences with competency-based learning.
2:00–3:00 p.m.	Concurrent Sessions—Afternoon <i>Competency-Based Education: Blending of In- and Out-of-School Learning</i> Jennifer Brown Lerner, Deputy Director, American Youth Policy Forum Jenna Tomasello, Policy Associate, American Youth Policy Forum Paul Leather

Contextual Factors Impacting Competency-Based Education Implementation: State Policy and College Admissions

Dr. R. Marc Brodersen

David Yanoski, Researcher, REL Central at Marzano Research

Stafford Peat, Senior Consultant, New England Board of Higher Education

David Ruff, Executive Director, Great Schools Partnership

Sarah Linet, Policy Specialist, Great Schools Partnership

How Does Subject Matter Matter? Findings from a Multi-year, Multi-site Evaluation of Competency-Based Learning at the High School Level

Dr. Brian Lord, Principal Research Scientist, Education Development Center (EDC)

Neil Schiavo, Senior Research Associate, EDC

Mary Beth Piecham, Project Director, EDC

3:00 p.m.

Adjourn

Breakout Sessions—Descriptions and Presenters

Morning Sessions

Local Implementation of State-Mandated Proficiency-Based Diploma Policy in Maine

Dr. Kathryn Hawes, Superintendent of Schools, Regional School Unit 21, Arundel, Kennebunk, and Kennebunkport, Maine

Dr. Erika Stump, Research Associate, Maine Education Policy Research Institute, University of Southern Maine

This session will explore empirical research and policy trends reflecting the challenges and facilitators in implementation at the district and school level of Maine's statewide proficiency-based education legislation. Examination was conducted of local practices through observations, qualitative interviews and document analysis since 2012. Findings suggest what worked for research participants and variation in interpretation and development of local and classroom practice. Session participants will be asked to share their experiences with standards-based and competency/proficiency-based education as well as discuss impacts and implications of state policy on local and regional education systems.

The Importance of Assessment in Competency-Based Systems: Two Districts' Experiences

Dr. R. Marc Brodersen, Senior Researcher, REL Central at Marzano Research

Kenneth Daly, Assistant Principal, Lyman Hall High School, Wallingford, Conn.

This session will review two studies examining the importance and implications of classroom assessment in competency/mastery-based classrooms. The experiences in two districts (Wallingford Public Schools, Conn., and Adams County School District 50, Colo.) will first be discussed. Audience members will then be engaged in discussions examining the relevance of the classroom assessment issues raised during the presentation for their own school or district context, assessment issues or challenges they are currently facing, and identification of steps school or districts might take to overcome these challenges.

What Does Competency-Based Learning Look Like in the Classroom? Exploring (and Measuring!) Student Experiences

Wendy Surr, Senior Researcher, American Institutes for Research (AIR)

Lauren Clymer, Research Associate, AIR

Dr. Sarah Ryan, Research Associate, REL Northeast & Islands

Josh Cox, Research Associate, REL Northeast & Islands

Derek Hamilton, Dean of Operations, Pittsfield School District, N.H.

Many states are moving away from approaches that base student advancement on credits and “seat time” toward competency-based learning approaches that provide schools with the flexibility to link advancement to a student’s mastery of content. One challenge for practitioners and researchers interested in competency-based learning reforms has been the lack of available instruments for defining and measuring competency-based learning practices in schools. During this session, research teams from the American Institutes for Research (AIR) and from REL Northeast & Islands at EDC will share how they are addressing this challenge through identifying key features of competency-based learning environments, developing and administering competency-based learning surveys, and capturing experiences, perceptions and outcomes associated with competency-based learning implementation.

Researchers from AIR will present findings from a recent study, funded by the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, in which they developed teacher and student surveys to examine implementation of competency-based learning practices, and explore the relationship between students' experiences of competency-based learning practices and their learning skills, behaviors, and dispositions. Researchers from REL Northeast & Islands will present on the collaborative process they used to develop a student survey with practitioners, policymakers, and researchers. This recently published survey can be used by schools and districts to examine students' beliefs about, exposure to, and understanding of key elements of competency-based learning. Audience members will have the opportunity to share their own competency-based learning perspectives and experiences, interact with other participants, and ask questions of presenters.

Afternoon Sessions

Competency-Based Education: Blending of In- and Out-of-School Learning

Jennifer Brown Lerner, Deputy Director, American Youth Policy Forum

Jenna Tomasello, Policy Associate, American Youth Policy Forum

Paul Leather, Deputy Commissioner of Education, New Hampshire Department of Education (discussant)

Youth need a range of knowledge, skills, abilities, and dispositions in order to be ready for success in postsecondary education and work that schools alone cannot provide. Afterschool programs, summer enrichment, and other kinds of expanded learning opportunities provide youth with the experience, training, and development to cultivate these important skills during out-of-school time, while competency-based education allows students to earn credits both inside and outside of the traditional classroom. This session will explore the emerging concept of afterschool informing CBE and vice versa to better serve youth both during the traditional school day and beyond for postsecondary success.

Contextual Factors Impacting Competency-Based Education Implementation: State Policy and College Admissions

Dr. R. Marc Brodersen, Senior Researcher, REL Central at Marzano Research

David Yanoski, Researcher, REL Central at Marzano Research

Stafford Peat, Senior Consultant, New England Board of Higher Education

David Ruff, Executive Director, Great Schools Partnership

Sarah Linet, Policy Specialist, Great Schools Partnership

What supports are necessary at the state, district, and school level to successfully implement competency-based education? This session will focus on examining the state policy factors that might support or hinder implementation at the local level and how competency-based education (CBE) practices are ultimately translated in school profiles and transcripts. The presenters will share the framework used in a multi-state policy scan and the results of a focus group with deans and directors of admission at highly selective private colleges and universities. They will engage the audience in a conversation about policy supports and barriers in CBE implementation and the factors that matter most in the college-admissions process. Participants will leave with a greater understanding what state agencies, districts, and schools can do to best support the implementation of CBE and the college admissions process for all students.

How Does Subject Matter Matter? Findings from a Multi-year, Multi-site Evaluation of Competency-Based Learning at the High School Level

Dr. Brian Lord, Principal Research Scientist, Education Development Center (EDC)

Neil Schiavo, Senior Research Associate, EDC

Mary Beth Piecham, Project Director, EDC

Efforts to implement competency-based learning (CBL) at the high school level frequently are based on schoolwide policies and practices that provide few distinctions between subject areas. However, such an approach may overlook factors related to curriculum, curriculum materials, conceptual foundations of subjects, content-area benchmarks, and department-level culture that complicate the adoption of CBL. In this session, we compare findings on English and mathematics instruction and assessment within and across several high schools that are actively implementing CBL practices. These findings include teacher and student reports of assessment and instructional activities associated with CBL, as well as findings on teacher attitudes, professional learning experiences, and collaborative culture that may affect CBL implementation in classrooms. The presentation will include findings from schools with clear differences by subject area, as well as counter-examples of schools where there were few or no differences attributable to content area. Attendees will join in discussions of factors that may account for subject-matter differences in CBL implementation, consider the implications of these findings for future design and implementation of CBL at the high school level, and share their own experiences and observations of the influence of subject matter in CBL adoption.